

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
IO-13 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 BIB-01 EB-08 OMB-01 /101 W  
-----038661 011840Z /75

P 011719Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2453  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
AMCONSUL MUNICH  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
USMISSION USNATO  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 12354

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CZ, UR  
SUBJECT: BREZHNEV'S PERFORMANCE IN PRAGUE

REF: PRAGUE 1390(NOTAL)

1. ALTHOUGH SOVIET TV OBVIOUSLY IS CONCERNED TO SHOW  
BREZHNEV IN THE BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT, OUR IMPRESSION  
FROM LOCAL TV COVERAGE OF HIS VISIT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA  
IS THAT LEONID IL'ICH HAS THUS FAR PERFORMED ABOVE HIS  
RECENT PAR.

2. IN WHAT SEEMED TO BE LIVE COVERAGE, SOVIET TV  
CARRIED BREZHNEV'S MAY 30 DEPARTURE FROM MOSCOW AS  
WELL AS HIS ARRIVAL IN PRAGUE LATER THAT DAY. THE  
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FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE DEPARTURE-ARRIVAL COVERAGE  
STRUCK US AS NOTEWORTHY:

--ON OUR SOVIET COLOR SETS, BREZHNEV LOOKED TAN AND  
REASONABLY FIT; THERE WAS NO INDICATION OF UNUSUAL  
FACIAL SWELLING;  
--THE TV CAMERA STAYED ON BREZHNEV AS HE CLIMBED THE

STAIRS, UNASSISTED, TO THE AIRPLANE; HE WENT UP THE STAIRS AT A NORMAL PACE AND SEEMED TO EXPERIENCE NO DIFFICULTY DOING SO;

--BREZHNEV WAS NOT SHOWN DESCENDING THE STAIRS FROM HIS PLANE AT PRAGUE AIRPORT; THE TV CAMERA SHOWED HIM WALKING FROM THE PLANE'S CABIN TO THE TOP PLATFORM OF THE STAIRS, BUT CUT AWAY AS AN AIDE EMERGED FROM THE PLANE, APPARENTLY TO ASSIST LEONID IL'ICH'S DESCENT;

--HIS GAIT AND PHYSICAL APPEARANCE SEEMED NORMAL, FOR HIM, AS HE WENT THROUGH THE AIRPORT ARRIVAL CEREMONIES AND SUBSEQUENT FORMALITIES AT HIS PRAGUE RESIDENCE.

3. WE WERE OF COURSE WATCHING SOVIET TV'S APPARENTLY LIVE COVERAGE OF THE MAY 31 PRAGUE MEETING AT WHICH BREZHNEV SPOKE. UNTIL THE "TECHNICAL FAILURE," WE THOUGHT HIS SPEAKING PERFORMANCE WAS MARKEDLY BETTER THAN DURING HIS FRG TRIP OR DURING HIS KOMSOMOL CONGRESS ADDRESS IN LATE APRIL. ON THIS OCCASION HE SLURRED BADLY IN ONE OR TWO PLACES (SUBSEQUENTLY EDITED OUT OF THE SOVIET TV REPLAY), BUT HIS PACE WAS MORE NORMAL AND HIS DICTION WAS CLEARER OVERALL THAN IN HIS LAST TWO PUBLIC SPEAKING PERFORMANCES. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT MEDIA COVERAGE OF HIS SPEECH WAS INTERRUPTED BECAUSE OF AN EMBARRASSING COUGHING SPELL, WE AGREE WITH EMBASSY PRAGUE THAT NO COUGHING, OR ANY OTHER APPARENT SIGN OF DIFFICULTY, IMMEDIATELY PRECEDED THE BREAK. OUR AUDIO TAPE OF THE SPEECH LEAVES NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT. IT DOES SEEM POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT, AS ON SOME "LIVE" U.S. TELEVISION SHOWS, A DELAY FACTOR OF SEVERAL SECONDS MAY BE BUILT INTO SOVIET/EE TELEVISION COVERAGE OF BREZHNEV.

5. WE WERE INTRIGUED AT EMBASSY PRAGUE'S REPORT THAT THE WHOLE BREZHNEV SPEECH WAS RERUN ON CZECHOSLOVAK TV THE EVENING OF MAY 31. ON THE SOVIET TV NEWS AT SIX P.M. THE LOCAL TV ANNOUNCER READ THE WHOLE SPEECH. ON THE "VREMYA" NEWS SHOW AT NINE P.M., VIDEO AND AUDIO OF BREZHNEV SPEAKING WAS RUN UNTIL JUST BEFORE THE POINT AT WHICH THE "LIVE" COVERAGE HAD BEEN INTERRUPTED. THE VOICE OF THE LOCAL ANNOUNCER THEN CAME ON, WHILE THE VIDEO CONTINUED. AFTER THE ANNOUNCER READ SEVERAL PARAGRAPHS, AUDIO

OF BREZHNEV'S VOICE CAME BACK ON FOR THE LAST FIVE MINUTES OR SO OF THE ADDRESS. DURING THAT SEGMENT, HIS PERFORMANCE STRUCK US AS ABOUT THE SAME AS DURING THE FIRST PART OF THE SPEECH. SO EVEN IF HE SUFFERED A COUGHING SPELL, HE APPARENTLY RECOVERED QUICKLY AND FULLY.

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-----038660 011837Z /75

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USMISSION USNATO  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 12354

6. "VREMYA" WENT ON TO CARRY VIDEO AND AUDIO OF BREZHNEV'S BRIEF AWARD SPEECHES FOR HUSAK AND BILAK WHICH WE ASSUME TOOK PLACE AFTER BREZHNEV'S MAJOR SPEECH MAY 31. BREZHNEV SEEMED TO PERFORM WELL DURING THESE AWARD FORMALITIES. MATLOCK

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## Message Attributes

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**Concepts:** HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
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**Subject:** BREZHNEV'S PERFORMANCE IN PRAGUE  
**TAGS:** PINT, PGOV, SOPN, CZ, UR, (BREZHNEV, LEONID)  
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**Review Markings:**  
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